CLAIMS

1. A messaging system for providing messaging to end-users, the system comprising:

a data store module for storing messages sent among the end-users, wherein each message includes one or more submessages and wherein the data store stores the messages and submessages in a relational manner.

2. The messaging system of claim 1, wherein the data store module comprises:

a contents module adapted to store submessages of the messages sent among the end-users, wherein a message sent by a sender to a recipient includes one or more references to submessages in the contents module.

3. The messaging system of claim 2, wherein the contents module stores a plurality of submessages and wherein certain ones of the submessages are created by different end-users at different times.

4. The messaging system of claim 1, wherein the data store module stores only a single version of each message and/or submessage.

5. The messaging system of claim 1, further comprising:

an attributes module for storing attributes of the messages and/or submessages in the data store.

6. The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is retained.

7. The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is valid.

8. The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating security information for a message and/or submessage.

9. The messaging system of claim 5, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating whether a message and/or submessage can be viewed by a given end-user.

10. The messaging system of claim 1, further comprising:

a relationships module for holding data describing relationships among the messages and submessages.

11. The messaging system of claim 10, wherein the relationships module is adapted to hold data describing submessages within a message.

12. The messaging system of claim 1, further comprising:

a client interface module for interfacing with client applications utilized by the end-users to access the messaging system.

13. A computer program product comprising:

a computer-readable medium having computer program logic embodied therein for providing messaging to end-users, the system comprising:

a data store module for storing messages sent among the end-users, wherein each message includes one or more submessages and wherein the data store stores the messages and submessages in a relational manner.

14. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the data store module comprises:

a contents module adapted to store submessages of the messages sent among the end-users, wherein a message sent by a sender to a recipient includes one or more references to submessages in the contents module.

15. The computer program product of claim 14, wherein the contents module stores a plurality of submessages and wherein certain ones of the submessages are created by different end-users at different times.

16. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the data store module stores only a single version of each message and/or submessage.

17. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:

an attributes module for storing attributes of the messages and/or submessages in the data store.

18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is retained.

19. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is valid.

20. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating security information for a message and/or submessage.

21. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating whether a message and/or submessage can be viewed by a given end-user.

22. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:

a relationships module for holding data describing relationships among the messages and submessages.

23. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the relationships module is adapted to hold data describing submessages within a message.

24. The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:

a client interface module for interfacing with client applications utilized by the end-users to access the messaging system.

25. A computer-implemented method of providing messaging to end-users, comprising:

storing messages sent among the end-users in a data store of a messaging system, wherein each message includes one or more submessages and wherein the data store stores the messages and submessages in a relational manner.

26. The computer-implemented method of claim 25, further comprising:

defining an attributes module in the messaging system, the attributes module for storing attributes of the messages and/or submessages in the data store.

27. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is retained.

28. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating a length of time that a message and/or submessage is valid.

29. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating security information for a message and/or submessage.

30. The computer-implemented method of claim 26, wherein the attributes module is adapted to store an attribute indicating whether a message and/or submessage can be viewed by a given end-user.

31. The computer-implemented method of claim 25, further comprising:

defining a relationships module in the messaging system, the relationships module for holding data describing relationships among the messages and submessages.

32. The computer-implemented method of claim 31, wherein the relationships module is adapted to hold data describing submessages within a message.